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ABSTRACT

Asserting that psychoanalysis and writing instruction have much to offer each other, this book examines the intersection between these two fields and proposes pedagogical uses of psychoanalytic technique for writing instruction. Articulating an approach based on the work of Jacques Lacan, the book shows how a psychoanalytic perspective can offer useful insights into the nature of the writing process, the sources of writing problems, and the dynamics of writing instruction. According to the book, psychoanalysis reveals that the writing process is profoundly affected by factors that current theories have largely neglected--forces such as enjoyment, desire, fantasy, and anxiety, which are often unconscious. The book further reveals that the conflict between these forces and the ego and its defenses are at the root of many writing problems. It also offers strategies that writing teachers can use to help students reduce their psychological conflicts and improve their writing while also benefiting personally. The book contends that empirical studies and personal testimonies have demonstrated the psychological (and even the physical) benefits of writing about personal conflict in an academic setting. It suggests that a psychoanalytic writing pedagogy offers the opportunity to undermine the psychological roots of many social problems, including intolerance and various forms of self-destructive behavior. (NKA)

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